

THE RICE INSTITUTE

HOUSTON, TEXAS

October 24, 1952

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Dept. of Genetics  
Univ. of Wisconsin  
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

You are to be congratulated on your clear exposition of the symbiotic relationship between bacteria and viruses in the chapter you wrote for Werkman and Wilson's Bacterial Physiology.

In this connection, I should like to call your attention to an article which I wrote several years ago on the "Viroid Theory", a mimeographed copy of which I am enclosing. To my knowledge this article contains the first clear statement of a wide-spread symbiotic relationship between bacteria and micro-organisms related to viruses, organisms that I have termed "viroids".

I assume that you must have overlooked this article, since you make no reference to it. I can easily understand this, since the article appeared in the American Naturalist, a journal not specifically devoted to micro-biology, and the article appeared at a time when many biologists were not yet even prepared to admit that viruses were organisms, let alone that related organisms might be symbionts of universal occurrence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edgar Altenburg". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Edgar A. Altenburg